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**Citation for published version:**

Stjepanovic, D 2013 'Perceived Co-Ethnics' and Kin-State Citizenship in Southeastern Europe' CITSEE Working Paper Series, no. 26, vol. 2013, CITSEE.  
<[http://www.citsee.ed.ac.uk/working\\_papers/files/CITSEE\\_WORKING\\_PAPER\\_2013-26.pdf](http://www.citsee.ed.ac.uk/working_papers/files/CITSEE_WORKING_PAPER_2013-26.pdf)>

**Link:**

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

**Document Version:**

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

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CITSEE WORKING PAPER SERIES



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Dejan Stjepanović

Working Paper 2013/26



European Research Council



University of Edinburgh, School of Law  
The Europeanisation of Citizenship in the Successor States of the Former Yugoslavia  
(CITSEE)

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CITSEE Working Paper Series 2013/26

Edinburgh, Scotland, UK

ISSN 2046-4096

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Published in the United Kingdom  
The University of Edinburgh  
School of Law  
Old College, South Bridge  
Edinburgh, EH8 2QL  
Scotland, UK

[www.citsee.ed.ac.uk/working\\_papers](http://www.citsee.ed.ac.uk/working_papers)

This work was supported by funding from the CITSEE project (The Europeanisation of Citizenship in the Successor States of the Former Yugoslavia), based at the University of Edinburgh, UK. CITSEE is funded by the European Research Council under the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme, ERC Grant no. 230239, and the support of the ERC is acknowledged with thanks.

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## **‘Perceived Co-Ethnics’ and Kin-State Citizenship in Southeastern Europe**

Dejan Stjepanović, University of Edinburgh<sup>1</sup>

### **Abstract**

The paper analyses the often neglected ‘perceived co-ethnics’ in the analysis of citizenship policies. The paper argues this is an interstitial category that further complicates the triadic nexus between national minorities, nationalizing states and kin-states. Apart from bringing the perceived co-ethnics issue into the focus, the paper elucidates citizenship policies affecting groups that challenge the exact fit between ethnicity and nation; showing how national governments through particular citizenship policies and categorisation practices engage in construction of groups. The paper shows that the triadic nexus framework which has had a strong influence on citizenship and minorities scholarship needs to be revised in some aspects and include unidirectional relations between the elements of the triadic nexus. The paper is based on the comparison between the cases of ethnic Vlachs and Bunjevci in the context Albania, Croatia, Greece and Serbia.

### **Keywords:**

Southeastern Europe, citizenship, minorities, co-ethnics, kin-state

### **1. Introduction**

Most nation states in Southeastern Europe (SEE) have proactive policies targeting their ethnic kin. Co-ethnics living in neighbouring countries have more often than not been given access to external citizenship either as full citizenship or other citizenship-related rights by kin-states.<sup>2</sup> The governments of the kin-states have for various reasons (oftentimes instrumental) argued that they are responsible for the protection of their co-ethnics residing in the neighbouring countries and offered the benefit of their country’s citizenship. In the context of state dissolution, various types of frozen conflicts or other forms of intrastate disputes, phenomena still common for the large part of SEE, this external citizenship has frequently caused tensions between kin and host states. Kin-states together with nationalising (host) states and national minorities constitute a specific constellation of conflicting nationalisms, the so-called ‘triadic nexus’<sup>3</sup> common to post-1989 Europe.

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<sup>2</sup> For a detailed account of externalisation of ethnic citizenship in the region see Marko Žilović, “Citizenship, Ethnicity, and Territory: the Politics of Selecting by Origin in Post-Communist Southeast Europe”, CITSEE working paper 2012/20

<sup>3</sup> Rogers Brubaker. *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*. Cambridge University Press, 1996.

While there has been a proliferation of academic texts<sup>4</sup> on kin-states and their role in the politicisation of their co-ethnics abroad, often obscured in the analysis of citizenship policies are the ‘perceived co-ethnics’, an interstitial category that further complicates the triadic nexus. These are, as I define them in this paper, minority groups that do not necessarily self-identify with the kin-state majority in a strict ethnic sense (even less so in terms of political nationalism claims) but are nonetheless subject to kin-state external ethnic citizenship policies.

Apart from bringing the perceived co-ethnics issue into the focus, the paper aims at elucidating citizenship policies affecting groups that challenge the exact fit between ethnicity and nation; showing how national governments through particular citizenship policies and categorisation practices engage in construction of groups. The paper also sheds light on the differences between legally espoused norms and policy makers’ sociohistorically conditioned understandings of political membership.

In terms of contributing to the existing literature on external citizenship, the paper will show that the triadic nexus framework which has had a strong influence on citizenship and minorities scholarship needs to be revised in some aspects and include a more nuanced analysis of other phenomena such as ‘perceived co-ethnics’. This paper argues that despite the fact that a lot of recent (constructivist) literature considers groups as socially constructed and a part of political processes, the triadic nexus framework has a few shortcomings. One of them is the issue of perceived co-ethnics. This is the gap in the literature that I would like to address. The paper will refer to a number of cases of perceived co-ethnics and external citizenship policies that contribute both to the theoretical debate but also serve as a mapping out exercise of the phenomenon. The paper’s main arguments are, however, based on the comparison of two cases, Aromanians in Albania, and Bunjevci in Serbia, that well-illustrate a number of relevant issues and include both temporal and variation across the elements of the triadic nexus model.

## 2. Co-ethnics and kin-states: Theoretical considerations

Most of the literature holds that just like nations, diasporas and co-ethnics are not naturally occurring groups but primarily political projects.<sup>5</sup> Many analysts initially saw these politicised groups as a challenge to the concept of the territorial nation-state<sup>6</sup> or having a potentially negative influence on the homeland politics through

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<sup>4</sup> Cited in the next section.

<sup>5</sup> For example Rogers Brubaker “The ‘Diaspora’ Diaspora.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28, no. 1 (2005): 1–19; Rainer Bauböck and Thomas Faist, *Diaspora and Transnationalism: Concepts, Theories and Methods* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010); Rogers Brubaker and Jaeeun Kim, “Transborder Membership Politics in Germany and Korea.” *Archives Européennes De sociologie/European Journal of Sociology* 52, no. 1 (2011): 21–75.

<sup>6</sup> Linda G. Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, and Cristina Szanton Blanc *Nations unbound: transnational projects, postcolonial predicaments, and deterritorialized nation states* (Basel: Gordon and Breach, 1995);

'long-distance nationalism'.<sup>7</sup> More recently it has been claimed that co-ethnics need not be a liability for the kin-state but can instead be a resource that can be nurtured and ultimately exploited,<sup>8</sup> thus leaning towards an instrumentalist explanation<sup>9</sup> of kin-state intervention including the externalisation of citizenship regimes.

The reasons for kin-state interventions vary, including domestic political concerns, communal solidarity, competing foreign policy goals and benefits from economic resources.<sup>10</sup> Waterbury describes the ways policies can be manifested, through support for change of host state policies, funding of diaspora community organisations, offering various forms of citizenship and related rights, extending the benefits of cultural and symbolic membership.<sup>11</sup> The focus of this paper is primarily on full and formal citizenship. However, it touches upon the related issue of less-than-full external quasi-citizenship, known also as 'ethnizenship'<sup>12</sup> that targets co-ethnics or perceived co-ethnics alike.

It is worth going back to earlier literature that dealt with the issue of external citizenship targeting co-ethnics. Michael Walzer was among the first authors that tried to conceptualise kin-state citizenship and its relations to the populations they recognised as belonging to its constitutive ethnic group. He based his analogy on kinship premises, likening them to that of family relations. According to him, those with strong ties to the way of life of the kin-state may be given access to citizenship. The potential candidates are then a "particular group of outsiders, recognized as national or ethnic 'relatives'".<sup>13</sup> The concept of ethnic relatives *prima facie* comes close to my understanding of perceived co-ethnics. Nevertheless, Walzer's concept of 'ethnic relatives' is problematic on two accounts.

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Kchachig Tölölyan, "The Nation-state and its others : in lieu of a preface" In G. Eleyand, Grigor Suny, R. (ed.), *Becoming National: A reader*, (Oxford: OUP, 1991).

<sup>7</sup> Benedict Anderson, "Long Distance Nationalism" in B. Anderson (Ed.), *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia and the World* pp. 58-74 (London: Verso, 2008).

<sup>8</sup> Eva Østergaard-Nielsen, *International migration and sending countries: perceptions, policies, and transnational relations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

<sup>9</sup> Authors in international relations (with realist inclinations) such as Stephen M. Saideman, have made more explicitly instrumental arguments. Saideman's view is that ethnic ties (affective motives) are the basic drivers of ethnic interventions insofar as governments seek to respond to genuine concerns that their constituents feel for ethnic kin over the border. However, strategic choice or instrumentalism also comes into play when governments face too many constraints to engage in ethnic interventions or when the elite's core constituency changes so that the previous constituents' cross-border affective ties are no longer important to the elites. This paper acknowledges the importance of instrumental use of external ethnic citizenship but does not consider it as the only explanation of the phenomenon.

<sup>10</sup> Charles King, *Extreme Politics: Nationalism, Violence and the End of Eastern Europe* (Oxford: OUP, 2010), see pages 148-151.

<sup>11</sup> Myra A. Waterbury, "Bridging the divide: Towards a comparative framework for understanding kin state and migrant-sending state diaspora politics" in *Diaspora and Transnationalism: Concepts, Theories and Methods* (Amsterdam: AUP, 2010).

<sup>12</sup> This term has been coined by Rainer Bauböck, "Stakeholder Citizenship and Transnational Political Participation: A Normative Evaluation of External Voting." *Fordham Law Review*, 2007, 75(5): 2393-2447.

<sup>13</sup> Michael Walzer, *Spheres Of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality*. (Basic Books, 1984) p. 41.

First, it reifies groups and ascribes qualities usually associated with immediate and recognisable kin such as family. This sort of reification is easily dismissed by most constructivist theories (such as those mentioned earlier which are based on the work of Anderson and Brubaker).<sup>14</sup> The second, less obvious and more serious underlying problem of the 'ethnic relatives' concept relates to the self-identification of the 'relatives' themselves residing in the host-country. Identification and recognition of group political claims in this context is conditioned by at least three relevant actors. Those include the host state that legally and politically recognises the particular identity of an ethnic group; the kin-state; as well as the minority group members and ethnic entrepreneurs that claim to represent the minority. In terms of political self-identification the perceived co-ethnics differ from what is usually considered as kin-minority, a homonymous population to that of the kin-state ethnic majority who are both recognised as such and self-identify in that way and make political claims that are largely congruent with the nationalist projects of the kin-state. Some obvious examples are the ethnic Hungarian minority in Serbia, Slovaks in Hungary or Germans in Denmark. These ethnocultural groups most often self-identify as different and have separate political claims to that of the ethnic majority of the host state and politically identify with the kin-state's national project. The concept of political identity which can have numerous definitions is understood here the way Rogers M. Smith defines it as the "collective label for a set of characteristics by which persons are recognized by political actors as members of a political group[.] There are many sources of such recognition, such as[...]nation-state membership, ethnicity, economic status, language[.] All these possible sources are only political identities when political actors treat them as such."<sup>15</sup> Thus, the emphasis here is on political actors rather than on individuals and their sociological identity.

As regards the normative argumentation behind Walzer's concept, his arguments are not necessarily based on the principle of remedial justice<sup>16</sup> but on the existence of a family-like ethnonational bond which could then be considered as a legitimate reason for handing out external citizenship. As explained above, this argument is hard to sustain on either normative grounds or even by the fact that the affected population does not necessarily share the sense of commonality or kinship ties with the kin-state's ethnic majority. Such are the arguments of liberal nationalists such as David Miller<sup>17</sup> who are prone to defend national identities as valid sources of solidarity based on which one is justified in recognising special obligations to our co-

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<sup>14</sup> See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London & New York: Verso, 1983) and Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2004).

<sup>15</sup> Rogers M. Smith, "Identities, Interests, and the Future of Political Science." *Perspectives on Politics* 2, no. 2 (June 1, 2004), p.302.

<sup>16</sup> It must be said that Walzer, however, argues in favour of kin-states having the right to offer shelter to its co-ethnics who are persecuted by their host-states, see p. 42.

<sup>17</sup> Miller, David. *On Nationality*. Oxford University Press, 1995. Also *Citizenship and National Identity* (Malden: Polity Press, 2000).



nationals.<sup>18</sup> According to this argument, sharing of a common national identity is one of the prerequisites for redistributive justice. Probably even Miller would not consider the case of perceived co-ethnics residing abroad (thus not subject to positive legal norms of the kin-state and its territorial scope of authority) and not identifying or sharing the same identity with the kin-state majority as legitimate recipients of citizenship and encompassing rights.<sup>19</sup> Most of the previous literature has been constructed on certain normative premises which are not the focus of this paper (which is driven by an empirical puzzle and led by the need to conceptualise the role of perceived co-ethnics in the triadic nexus constellation). This is especially pertinent because of the fact that despite all the philosophical and normative deficits of extending citizenship based on perceived ethnic proximity, it is a common practice especially visible in Southeastern Europe that the states perceive the existence of 'relatives' who, for the reasons explained above I prefer to call perceived co-ethnics, are often offered a range of benefits including various forms of access to rights in the kin-states, 'ethnizenship', or full formal citizenship.

### 3. Perceived co-ethnics and the triadic nexus

Who are then the perceived co-ethnics and does their visibility in SEE indicate this is only a regional phenomenon? How do they complicate the triadic nexus and how are they different from usual cases of minorities? For that reason it might be relevant to look at a definition of minorities which elucidates what can be conceptualised as a national minority and what is its relation to a kin-state. In the European context primarily, Michael Keating differentiates stateless nations such as Catalonia or Scotland from national minorities, given that, as he writes, the term 'national minority' more often refers to a "people within a state whose primary reference point is a nation situated elsewhere."<sup>20</sup> Stateless nations based on that definition are those whose national homeland is the sub-state entity nested within a sovereign state. We can see that there is a strong conceptual correlation between the political status of an ethnonational group in a sovereign state and the existence of a kin-state. Probably because of a kind of double hermeneutic<sup>21</sup> reasoning, both the politicians and researchers of politics consider that a national minority should have an external homeland/kin-state or should politically identify with it. Social reality in general conforms reluctantly to categorisation but we can think of a few other categories of non-dominant national groups within a state that do not make a reference point to a nation situated elsewhere. One of them could be described as minority without a kin-

<sup>18</sup> In case national membership is defined by ethnicity as is in the majority of countries in SEE.

<sup>19</sup> On how welfare provisions are extended to co-ethnic kin in Bosnia and Herzegovina and what sort of issues arise based on that both in the host and kin-states see Eldar Sarajlić, "Citizenship and Social Justice in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia", CITSEE working paper 2012/24.

<sup>20</sup> Keating, Michael. *Plurinational Democracy Stateless Nations in a Post-sovereignty Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) p. x.

<sup>21</sup> Anthony Giddens, *Social Theory and Modern Sociology* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1987), p.20.

state. The other category would be the perceived co-ethnics. Mostly descriptive rather than nomothetic, the following table captures some of the necessary characteristics and differences between the mentioned and related categories.<sup>22</sup> These are the cases of family resemblance exhibiting relationships between concepts with overlapping features.<sup>23</sup>

**Table 1.**

	<b>Distinct sub-state national territory (nested within a larger polity)<sup>24</sup></b>	<b>Political claims / political identity by the group members</b>	<b>Political claims by external "homeland"/ kin-state</b>	<b>Self-identification with a kin-state/external national homeland</b>
<b>Stateless<sup>25</sup> nations</b>	YES	YES	NO	NO
<b>Minorities without a kin-state</b>	NO	YES	NO	NO
<b>Perceived co-ethnics</b>	NO	YES	YES	NO
<b>Minorities with a kin-state</b>	NO	YES	YES	YES

Based on the table presented above we can see that some of the indispensable characteristics of a minority without a kin-state ideal type place it somewhere in between stateless nations and national minorities. In brief, these are politicised

<sup>22</sup> The table is not exhaustive and one could imagine other categories defined by the above criteria.

<sup>23</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein, "The Rejection of Logical Atomism", in Anthony Kenny (ed.), *The Wittgenstein Reader*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), p. 45.

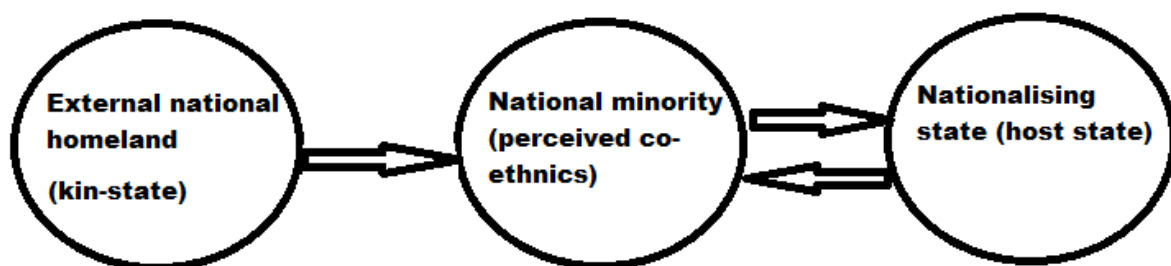
<sup>24</sup> This is a necessary condition for the definition. Admittedly, there are cases of territorial autonomies for minorities with a kin-state, but the existence of territorial autonomy is not a necessary condition for the definition of a national minority while a territorially defined sub-state unit is necessary in the definition of stateless nations.

<sup>25</sup> The category of stateless nations includes those ethnic and national groups dispersed across states such as, for example, Roma. See Erin Jenne "The Roma of Central and Eastern Europe: Constructing a Stateless Nation," in Jonathan Stein (ed.) *The Politics of National Minority Participation in Post-Communist Europe: State-building, Democracy, and Ethnic Mobilization* (Armonck, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2000), 189-212. I refer here to stateless nations as most of the literature on territorial politics would, by inclusion of a territorial reference in a usually nested and plurinational setting where a sub-state unit plays a role of nation-state (e.g. Kurdistan in Iraq) but, where there is no external, homonymous nation state. Other authors, when referring to what Keating calls stateless nations, use the term 'minority nations'. See Will Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular* (Oxford: Oxford University Press); Rainer Bauböck, "Cultural citizenship, minority rights, and self-government" in Aleinikoff, T. A., & Klusmeyer, D. (Eds.), *Citizenship Today*. (Washington: Carnegie, 2001).

(ethnic or cultural) groups that have a national political project<sup>26</sup> within an existing state such as Sorbs (Wends) for example in Germany or Ruthenians in Serbia's province of Vojvodina and are not necessarily subjected to a national project of an identifiable kin-state. They do not necessarily possess a distinct institutionalised sub-state territorial homeland such as stateless nations. Perceived co-ethnics are in a similar situation to that of stateless nations and minorities without a kin-state population and have or attempt to construct their own national project within the boundaries of the host-state. The perceived co-ethnics generally speaking have their own political self-identification and do not identify with an external homeland.<sup>27</sup> The latter distinction differentiates the perceived co-ethnics from usual minorities (with a kin-state) but the fact that an external kin-state considers certain groups to belong to its national project differentiates these perceived co-ethnics from minorities without a kin-state. This further shows the need to address the issue of perceived co-ethnicity and external kin-state citizenship as separate but at the same time closely related issues.

Let us return to the triadic nexus relation as proposed by Brubaker. This is "a triad linking national minorities, the newly nationalizing states in which they live, and the external national "homelands" to which they belong, or *can be construed as belonging*, by ethnocultural affinity though not by legal citizenship."<sup>28</sup> Brubaker understands the elements of the triad as fields rather than a socio-political reality. Fields are primarily relational and can be inhabited by various actors. It is the field of kin-state or national "homeland" that can cause certain problems for the model once it comes across the issue of perceived co-ethnicity. Applied in this case the relation between the field filled by national homeland elements and that of a national minority would be unidirectional, since the homeland considers its own national project to be congruent with that of the perceived co-ethnics, an occurrence best illustrated by figure 1.

**Figure 1. Perceived co-ethnics and the triadic nexus**



<sup>26</sup> Manifested by group claims for self-determination.

<sup>27</sup> The reference here as in most of the paper is to political elites and ethnic entrepreneurs and their politicisation of identity and groupness rather than to individual, personal national identification. Certainly, as I will argue later, there are different and competing visions of a named peoplehood both historic but also contemporary.

<sup>28</sup> Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*. Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 6. (my Italics)

Using Brubaker's terminology one can argue that the kin-state endeavours to *construct* the perceived co-ethnics *as belonging* to the external national homeland. Linking the action of national homelands or better called here 'self-declared' or 'perceiving' kin-states to citizenship regimes, we get a particular kind of dynamics that was not sufficiently accounted for in the literature. This interaction is further complicated by the externalisation of citizenship in which the kin-state confers ethnic citizenship to politicised ethnonational groups that do not identify with its own national project. By looking at actual cases of perceived co-ethnicity we can establish if there are any similarities in the policies of kin-states and nationalising (host) states towards the populations of perceived co-ethnics.

### 3.1. *Examples of Perceived co-ethnics in SEE*

#### 3.1.1. *Goranis and Pomaks as examples of perceived co-ethnics by more than one state*

The Gorani ethnonational group inhabiting primarily the Gora southern highland region of Kosovo (and the neighbouring areas of Albania) is subject to ethnic politics of at least four different national projects and corresponding, in some cases, external citizenship policies. Goranis are predominantly Muslims speaking a sub-type of the Torlakian South Slavic dialect used in parts of Bulgaria, Macedonia and Serbia. Under current Kosovan legislation, they are formally recognised as a separate national community of Goranis and have one guaranteed seat in the Kosovo parliament.<sup>29</sup> Currently very few people in the Gora region self-identify (in censuses) as Bosniak. In late Yugoslav censuses (1971 & 1981) they were largely declared as Muslims although they preferred to be called *Goranci*<sup>30</sup> (in their own linguistic form). This could be one of the reasons why some Bosniak historians<sup>31</sup> and politicians still consider that Goranis constitute a part of the Bosniak nation. As Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) does not possess instruments of ethnic external citizenship,<sup>32</sup> no external citizenship is offered to Goranis as a group currently. Bulgaria, unlike BiH, in the last ten years, has had pro-active external ethnic citizenship policies, the subjects of which were numerous ethnic groups including Macedonians (Orthodox) and Muslim Torbesh in the Republic of Macedonia, but also Goranis in Kosovo.<sup>33</sup> A number of residents of Gora and neighbouring Albania's Zhupa region have received Bulgarian citizenship for which it was sufficient to have declared themselves as belonging to the Bulgarian nation before officials of the Bulgarian

<sup>29</sup> Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo 2008, Article 64.

<sup>30</sup> Duijzings, Ger. *Religion and the Politics of Identity in Kosovo* (C. Hurst & Co. Publishers, 2000) p.27.

<sup>31</sup> See Imamović, Mustafa. *Historija Bošnjaka: Sandžačko izdanje* (Novi Pazar: Centar za bošnjačke studije, 2007).

<sup>32</sup> Žilović 2012, p.15.

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.dw.de/bugarski-paso%C5%A1i-sve-tra%C5%BEeniji-na-kosovu/a-15951135-1?maca=ser-Blic%20Online-2569-xml-mrss>

state.<sup>34</sup> Macedonian state policy is to consider Goranis ethnic Macedonians and to demand that Kosovo offers a formal recognition of a Macedonian community i.e. Goranis.<sup>35</sup>

Some of the reasons for the pro-active policies could possibly relate to a desire for reciprocity in ethnic relations with Kosovo linking the status of Albanians in the Republic of Macedonia to that of Macedonians in Kosovo. In fact, the Macedonian government's claim is that Goranis are *Torbeši*, an ethnic group, which it does not recognise as a separate national group but rather as part of the Macedonian nation of Muslim faith.<sup>36</sup> Despite the fact that Macedonia has restrictive external ethnic citizenship policies,<sup>37</sup> according to some sources there are 15,000 Goranis residing in Kosovo and an additional 6000 living in the Republic of Macedonia have received Macedonian citizenship.<sup>38</sup> Some (minor number) of the population in the Gora region indeed actively identifies as Muslim Macedonians of Kosovo. Finally, Serbia, due to its political stance that Kosovo is still a part of the Serbian state but also the fact that it considers itself as a protector of Gorani interests<sup>39</sup> as their ethnic kin-state (oftentimes Serbian historians consider Goranis as Islamised Serbs) has pro-active policies in terms of citizenship rights towards this group.<sup>40</sup>

Bearing in mind the fact that at the time of writing, Kosovan citizens need visas to travel to most European countries, the citizenships of Macedonia and especially Bulgaria,<sup>41</sup> since the latter will as of 2014 permit employment in all the EU states, necessarily have a strong appeal. The example of Goranis shows the most capacious form of perceived ethnicity and externalisation of citizenship in which all the countries (save BiH) but also Macedonia (which does not have similar policies anywhere else in the region), offer as expansive ethnic citizenship policies as possible.

Pomaks are Muslim, an ethnic group of Slav speakers (whose dialects are similar to Bulgarian dialects) predominantly residing in Western Thrace in Greece, a population that was not included in the Greek-Turkish population exchange in the

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<sup>34</sup> [http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en\\_GB/features/setimes/features/2012/04/16/feature-04](http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2012/04/16/feature-04)

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.infoecmi.eu/index.php/macedonia-request-macedonians-should-be-recognized-in-kosovos-constitution/>

<sup>36</sup> Jane K. Kowan, *Macedonia: The Politics of Identity and Difference* (Pluto Press, 2000) p.111

<sup>37</sup> See Marko Žilović, CITSEE WP

<sup>38</sup> [http://setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/sr\\_Latn/features/setimes/features/2012/04/16/feature-04](http://setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/sr_Latn/features/setimes/features/2012/04/16/feature-04)

<sup>39</sup> One of the recent platforms of the Serbian government on Kosovo, adopted in 2013, includes provision for the creation of an autonomous Gorani community which can join the forseen association of Serb municipalities of Kosovo.

<sup>40</sup> This is not enough to say that Serbia treats Goranis currently as perceived co-ethnics, but could do so in future if Serbia's and Kosovo's citizenship regimes are clearly separated.

<sup>41</sup> Serbian citizens with residency in Kosovo cannot travel visa-free to Schengen countries for the time being.

1920s. Their current number is estimated at 30,000.<sup>42</sup> Pomaks' ethnic identification is to a large degree conditioned by the nature of state policies targeted towards them by Greece, Turkey and Bulgaria.<sup>43</sup> Bulgaria considers them to be Islamised Bulgarians, Turkey as Bulgarian-speaking Turks or simply as mountainous Turks, and Greece initially as Turks in order to screen Bulgarian aspirations and then as an Islamised local population (*ντόπιοι-ντόπιοι*) with ancient Greek roots in order to minimise Turkey's influence.<sup>44</sup> Formally, they are not recognised as a separate minority in Greece but constitute a part of the 'Muslim'<sup>45</sup> minority in accordance with the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923.

Policies towards Pomaks can be summed up as constantly changing, depending on geopolitical context and in particular on interstate relations initially between Bulgaria and Greece pre-WWI, and in the interwar periods then Turkey-Greece relations after the 1920s. These external ethnic citizenship policies are not as inclusive (especially on Turkey's side)<sup>46</sup> as in the case of Goranis and their perceiving kin-states. Bulgaria offers Pomaks citizenship but so far there has not been a large demand for it from the Pomak population in Greece.<sup>47</sup> In Turkey, among the over 300,000 population of dual Bulgarian-Turkish citizens<sup>48</sup> there is a significant number of Pomaks (originating from either Bulgaria or Greece) that possess Bulgarian citizenship. Their exact numbers are disputed.

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<sup>42</sup> The last census in which one could declare their ethnicity as Pomak in Greece was held in 1951. The Greek Helsinki Committee estimates the number of Pomaks in Greece to be close to 30 000. See <http://www.greekhelsinki.gr/english/reports/pomaks.html> (last accessed 15 March 2013).

<sup>43</sup> Deniz Bulut Ture, "At the Intersection of Borders and Ethnicity: A Case Study Of The Pomaks" *Paper presented at the annual meeting of the MPSA Annual National Conference, Chicago, April 2008*.

<sup>44</sup> Tsitselikis, Konstantinos. *Old and New Islam in Greece: From Historical Minorities to Immigrant Newcomers* (Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2012) p.155. See also Tatjana Seyppel, "The Pomaks of Northeastern Greece: an endangered Balkan population", 10 *Journal of Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* (1989).

<sup>45</sup> The 'Muslim minority' in Greece's region of Western Thrace is ethnolinguistically diverse and consists of speakers of Turkish and Greek as well as Pomaks and Roma. The Greek state provides education to this entire heterogenous religious group primarily in Turkish.

<sup>46</sup> Turkey does not have strong external ethnic citizenship policies, but it did offer facilitated naturalisation to Pomaks who migrated to Turkey based on "Turkish descent", see Zeynep Kadirbeyoglu, "Country Report: Turkey", EUDO Citizenship Observatory, 2012.

<sup>47</sup> In somewhat reversed role, Pomak populations of Greece together with other non-ethnic Greeks, in other words ethnic minorities in Greece, until the law was abrogated in 1998, would lose their Greek citizenship in case they resided abroad for a period longer than 5 years. See Konstantinos Tsitselikis, "Aspects of Legal Communitarianism in Greece: Between Millet and Citizenship" *Oñati Socio-legal Series* 2012, pp. 111-112.

<sup>48</sup> Daniel Smilov and Elena Jileva, "The politics of Bulgarian citizenship: National identity, democracy and other uses" in Rainer Bauböck B. Perchinig, and W. Sievers, *Citizenship Policies in the New Europe* (Amsterdam University Press, 2009).

### 3.1.2. *Vlachs (Dacoromanians) in Serbia and Romania's kin-state role in the absence of full external citizenship*

According to the 1991 census, there were 20,000 declared Vlachs in Serbia, 40,000 in 2002 and 64,000 in 2012. Most of this population resides in Eastern Serbia bordering Bulgaria and Romania. Vlachs are a recognised national minority in Serbia and have their own national council managing aspects of non-territorial autonomy. Since the Dacoromanian Vlach dialects exhibit proximity to the standard Romanian language some have considered Serbia's Vlachs to constitute a part of the Romanian nation. Recently, Romania has adopted a pro-active policy<sup>49</sup> and threatened to block Serbia's path to the EU unless Serbia recognises Vlachs as a Romanian minority. The large majority of Vlachs does not self-identify with Romania and some of their representatives have expressed anti-Romanian attitudes.<sup>50</sup>

This is an interesting case in which there is no possibility of external citizenship by the perceiving kin-state because of its citizenship law which accords external citizenship to former citizens<sup>51</sup> primarily. There is some soft type of 'ethnizenship' or quasi-citizenship which includes offering scholarships to study in Romania, support for cultural associations and financial support for religious institutions. It is not clear if the full externalisation of ethnic citizenship (irrespective of the previous possession of Romanian citizenship) would have had different outcomes in terms of political identification with Romania.

### 3.1.3. *Other cases*

Some smaller groups such as Karakachani[Каракачани]/Sarakatsanoi[Σαρακατσανοί] in Bulgaria are illustrative and worth briefly mentioning although they are not an ideal case of perceived co-ethnics. The Karakachani/Sarakatsani case is interesting in the sense that Greece considers them as an ethnic Greek minority in Bulgaria<sup>52</sup> but does not extend citizenship. The logic behind this is to keep them in Bulgaria to preserve the reciprocity in ethnic relations that has dominated Greece's minority policies and near neighbourhood foreign policies. Even though the umbrella organisation of Sarakatsanoi in Bulgaria have demanded they be given Greek citizenship (as ethnic Sarakatsanoi rather than as ethnic Greeks) so far their demands

<sup>49</sup> Despite the fact that it does not offer ethnically based external citizenship (see EUDO citizenship report on Romania <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/docs/CountryReports/Romania.pdf>) but rather the one based on former citizenship. Serbian Vlachs as a group never possessed Romanian citizenship in the past so there are no grounds for the extension of external citizenship.

<sup>50</sup> See the statement by Dragan Balašević Vlach National Council vice-president titled „Vlachs are not Romanians, the Vlach language is not Romanian“ [*Vlasi nisu Rumuni niti je rumunski jezik vlaški*] <http://www.nacionalnisavetvlaha.rs/reagovanjabalasevic2.html> (last accessed 21 March 2013)

<sup>51</sup> Cf. the case of former Romanian citizens in Moldova. See EUDO <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/citizenship-news/86-pressrelease>

<sup>52</sup> <http://www.mfa.gr/en/greece-bilateral-relations/bulgaria/cultural-relations-and-greek-community.html>

have not been met.<sup>53</sup> Similar reasons were used for not extending full citizenship to ethnic Greeks in Albania prior to 2006. The significance of the interwar period when Bulgaria claimed to represent the Slavic (Macedonian) minority in Greek Macedonia and the experiences of that period have conditioned Greece's policies toward this group.

The Gagauz minority in Moldova is another case of perceived co-ethnics that deserves to be mentioned. They have access to Bulgarian citizenship on ethnic grounds and somewhat facilitated acquisition of Russian citizenship.<sup>54</sup> This list is not exhaustive; rather it shows tendencies in kin-state external citizenship policies targeting perceived co-ethnics and similar categories of ethnonational groups.

### 3.1.4. *Borderline cases*

There are a few fuzzy cases which might not directly correspond to the definition and the conceptualisation of perceived co-ethnics but share some characteristics with the ideal case as far as the role of the perceiving kin-state is concerned. One of them is the case of ethnic Macedonians and Bulgaria's external citizenship policies which enable all ethnic Macedonians residing in the countries of the region to acquire Bulgarian citizenship based on the perceived co-ethnicity. It must be noted that in this case one would have to declare their ethnicity as being Bulgarian, but using identity markers which can be interpreted as being either Macedonian or Bulgarian are sufficient proof of one's co-ethnicity. These would include ancestral school records or proof of membership in cultural associations. While this would not be a typical case of perceived co-ethnics because Macedonians are not a minority in the host-state but a majority, the case of the Macedonian minority in Albania which Bulgaria perceives as Bulgarian could more closely conform to the concept. Another similar case is of ethnic Muslims/Bosniaks originally from the Sandžak region living in Albania for whom Serbia plays a kin-state role.<sup>55</sup>

### 3.2. *"Perceived co-ethnics" elsewhere*

Despite the fact that SEE seems to be teeming with examples of perceived co-ethnics and targeted external citizenship policies of various kin-states, the frequency and

<sup>53</sup> See the transcript of the Greek parliament's session of 11 January 2007

<http://www.hellenicparliament.gr/Praktika/Synedriaseis-Olomeleias?sessionRecord=4c9c0eba-cc50-47ca-a347-819e63c86b05> (last accessed 16 March 2013)

<sup>54</sup> The case is only briefly mentioned here as Moldova is not always considered to be a Southeastern European country and the case does not illustrate any novel policy that has not been discussed in previously mentioned cases. More on <http://www.todayszaman.com/columnist-297986-moldovas-gagauz-people-and-identity-issues.html>

<sup>55</sup> See Libofsha, Një Oaz Serb Në Shqipëri, 2011.

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qLd7YqfuN88&feature=youtube\\_gdata\\_player](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qLd7YqfuN88&feature=youtube_gdata_player) (last accessed 20 March 2013); and "U selu Ret Libofša, svi uče srpski." Accessed February 18, 2013. <http://www.novosti.rs/vesti/planeta.300.html:413594-U-selu-Ret-Libofsa-svi-uce-srpski>.



intensity of these policies should not lead us astray and have us conclude that this is a uniquely and exceptionally Balkan phenomenon. The case of Silesians (predominantly residing in today's Poland) and the policies of both the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic in relevant periods post-1967, when separate citizenship regimes were introduced in the two countries, are illustrative. The historic province of Silesia<sup>56</sup> and people who self-identified as Silesians had a certain proximity to the German national project but could hardly be referred to as Germans, not least because of their native Slavic language. Silesians were claimed by Polish, Czech and German nationalists, in the former cases primarily due to linguistic similarity, while in the latter by the cultural and geographic proximity.

Both FRG and GDR citizenship policies were partly successful in attracting Silesians to accept both country's offers of citizenship on the grounds of perceived co-ethnicity, because of the ease of assimilation, the permeability of German culture and to some extent anti-Polish sentiment (exacerbated by Poland's non-recognition of a separate Silesian national minority) but above all by prospects of relative economic affluence which the German citizenship(s) would enable. Indicative is the fact that most of the time and especially in the case of the GDR,<sup>57</sup> Silesians chose to be registered as Germans in front of Polish authorities only if they intended to relocate to GDR. The FRG further enabled Silesians to become FRG citizens without renouncing their Polish citizenship.<sup>58</sup> The desirable aim of both countries' policies was not to use the minority issue in relations with Poland but rather to bring labour (that they were in need of at that time) without disrupting national homogeneity at home.

#### **4. Triadic nexus vicissitudes: the cases of Aromanians and Bunjevci as perceived co-ethnics**

The individual case studies in this analysis are based on research on the Aromanian/Vlach population in southern Albania and the Bunjevac population in Serbia's autonomous province of Vojvodina. The cases were chosen because of the fact that there is a change in the kin-state external citizenship policies towards the co-ethnics in the host states and the fact that there is a difference in formal recognition of these minorities by the host states thus creating a considerable degree of variation in the triadic nexus constellation. The studies involved not only the review of

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<sup>56</sup> Konrad Pędzwiatr, "Silesian autonomist movement in Poland and one of its activists", *L'Europe Rebelle* (Krakow: Tischner European University, 2009).

<sup>57</sup> Jannis Panagiotidis, "What is the German's Fatherland? The GDR and the Resettlement of Ethnic Germans from Socialist Countries (1949-1989)", Paper presented at the 2012 ASEES Annual Convention, New Orleans, 15-18 November 2012

<sup>58</sup> Maria Kovacs and Judith Toth, Kin-state responsibility and ethnic citizenship: The Hungarian case. Bauböck, R., Bernhard Perching, and Wiebke Sievers, *Citizenship Policies in the New Europe*. (Amsterdam University Press, 2007) p. 163.

primary and secondary source materials, but also fieldwork which included elite semi-structured interviews with political activists and prominent public figures who actively declare their Aromanian or Bunjevac identity in Korçë, Albania and Subotica, Serbia respectively in January 2013. The individual case studies look at similar thematic issues such as self-identification/external identification of groups, internal political divisions census data and identification by the home countries and the role of the external kin-state.

#### 4.1. *Vlachs/Aromanians in Albania and Greece's external citizenship policies*

##### 4.1.1. *Background (religion, ethnicity, language)*

Aromanian Vlachs (primarily inhabiting today's southeastern Albania, continental Greece and some areas of the Republic of Macedonia) are, just like Dacoromanian Vlachs (living in today's Serbia and mentioned earlier), speakers of an Eastern Romance language (called either Aromanian or Macedo-Aromanian) bearing some resemblance to the modern Romanian language but also to a smaller Meglenitic dialect spoken by a small number of Vlachs on the border between the Republic of Macedonia and Greece. They are known by exonyms such as Vlachs (*Vlahoi*, *Vlasi*) or *Cincars* but most frequently use the endonym *Armânji*, *Rrâmânji*.<sup>59</sup> By reference to the ethnographic work of Thede Kahl<sup>60</sup> and Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers<sup>61</sup> one can explain the historic development of Aromanian political project(s) in the Balkans and the influence and connectedness of Aromanian Vlach elites with other national projects (especially Greek) in the Balkans in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Orthodox Church, which the largest majority of Aromanian Vlachs adhered to, played an important role in both self-identification and perception by others. In Greece itself Aromanian Vlachs are largely integrated into the Greek national project as a distinct cultural and linguistic group within the Greek national corpus. Most of their representatives and their formal associations in Greece actively deny the claims that Aromanian Vlachs constitute a national minority. Illustrative of this stance is a letter sent to the Council of Europe by the umbrella organisation of Vlach association in Greece refuting Romania's president Traian Băsescu's claims that Greece does not recognise a Romanian minority living there. To that the president of the umbrella Vlach organisation responded in the following words "[n]o one is therefore entitled to characterise, in an arbitrary way, a large part of the Greek nation as a 'minority' in

<sup>59</sup> "The Albanian Aromanians Awakening - Schwandner-Sievers, Stephanie Edt. 1999." Scribd. Accessed February 10, 2013. <http://www.scribd.com/doc/27814585/The-Albanian-Aromanians-Awakening-Schwandner-Sievers-Stephanie-Edt-1999>.

<sup>60</sup> Thede Kahl, *The Ethnicity of Aromanians after 1990: the Identity of a minority that behaves like a majority*. In *Ethnologia Balkanica*. LIT Verlag Münster, n.d.

<sup>61</sup> "The Albanian Aromanians Awakening - Schwandner-Sievers, Stephanie Edt. 1999." Scribd. Accessed February 10, 2013. <http://www.scribd.com/doc/27814585/The-Albanian-Aromanians-Awakening-Schwandner-Sievers-Stephanie-Edt-1999>.

its own motherland, whose history, as a matter of fact, is plenty of examples of great Vlach-speaking national benefactors who dedicated their whole life, their whole achievements and their whole wealth to the freedom, prosperity and development of Hellenism and Greece.”<sup>62</sup> Vlach populations in Greece are well integrated into the Greek national project, despite Greece’s notorious minority rights track record, something that can be illustrated by the thriving Panhellenic Federation of Cultural Associations of Vlachs.<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, the association serves a peculiar role in its attempts to create a (Vlach) Greek diaspora in the neighbouring countries.<sup>64</sup>

#### 4.1.2. *Greek citizenship law and practices*

The Greek citizenship law has been in general terms rather inclusive towards its co-ethnics abroad, especially since the 1980s. However, ethnic Greeks living in Albania did not enjoy the full benefits of Greece’s expansive policies of external citizenship until 2006 when the law was amended and offered full citizenship to ethnic Greeks in Albania. The reasons for such restrictive policies could be partly explained by the “fear at the time, that acquiring Greek citizenship may cause the withdrawal of their Albanian citizenship and consequently represent the definitive historical extinction or statistical death of a Greek minority in Albania”<sup>65</sup> The fears of the Greek government were somewhat fulfilled as the censuses show a steady decrease of self-declared Greeks in Albania.<sup>66</sup> One can agree with both Christopoulos<sup>67</sup> and Anagnostou<sup>68</sup> that the fact that Albania did not recognise dual citizenship until 1998<sup>69</sup> is an important factor in the Greek external ethnic citizenship policies but it was definitely not the only cause for the change. Other important factors were the fact that by 2006 already a significant number of ethnic Greeks had moved to Greece

<sup>62</sup> Michalis Mageirias the president of the Panhellenic Federation of Cultural Associations of Vlachs, in a letter to the Council of Europe, 19 February 2011.

<sup>63</sup> Nikolaos Mertzos, the President of the Society of Macedonian Studies, in a speech at the annual Vlach New Year manifestation : “We are more Greek than the Greeks themselves” [Είμαστε περισσότεροι Έλληνες απ’ τους Έλληνες], 20 January 2013, Thessaloniki.

<sup>64</sup> At the same event Michaelis Mageirias, in his speech demanded a stronger involvement of the Greek state and extension of Greek citizenship and related rights to Vlachs living in the neighbouring Albania and the Republic of Macedonia.

<sup>65</sup> Dimitris Christopoulos, *Country Report: Greece* (EUDO Citizenship Observatory, Revised and updated January 2013), p.9.

<sup>66</sup> From 1989 until 2011, the number of self-declared Greeks according to censuses conducted in those years decreased by over half from 58 758 in 1989 to 24243 or under 1% of Albania’s population in (see <http://www.instat.gov.al/>).

<sup>67</sup> Christopoulos, 2013.

<sup>68</sup> Dia Anagnostou, *Citizenship policy Making in Mediterranean EU states: Greece* (EUDO Citizenship Observatory, May 2011).

<sup>69</sup> Since the adoption of the changed citizenship law in 1998 Albania tolerates dual citizenship. See Gëzim Krasniqi, *Country Case: Albania* (EUDO Citizenship Observatory, November 2012), p. 10.

living on ‘*κάρτα ομογενούς/karta omogenous*’<sup>70</sup> and the fact that the ethnic reciprocity policies<sup>71</sup> were failing because of this development. Thus, the Vlach issue became more prominent as this ethnic group is probably more numerous (according to some sources numbering up to 200,000 persons)<sup>72</sup> than the officially recognised Greek minority in Albania and was probably perceived as being easily lured by the offer of external ethnic citizenship. In terms of practices of according citizenship, it is important to stress that unlike some other cases, e.g. Bulgaria mentioned above, Greek authorities do not ask Aromanian Vlachs to declare themselves as Greeks or to speak Greek in order to claim citizenship, thus lowering the threshold for the acquisition of citizenship and expanding the numbers of potential applicants. Rather, the Greek state uses the so-called *Vlachometro/Βλαχόμετρο*, the ‘Vlachmeter,’ that includes either testing one’s Aromanian language skills or showing a proof of Vlach identity issued by one of the Vlach associations in Albania.<sup>73</sup> Interestingly enough although Aromanian language skills are sufficient for an Albanian citizen to prove their Greek co-ethnicity (*homogenis/ομογενής*), Greece does not recognise Vlach as a distinct language but rather calls it an oral idiom without written form.<sup>74</sup>

#### 4.1.3. *Demography, self-identification, censuses and legal minority framework in Albania*

The issue of political recognition (or the lack of it) of Aromanian Vlachs in Albania is controversial in terms of legal recognition as national minority, census figures and relations with the self-declared kin-states. One of the main reasons why Aromanians are not recognised as a national minority can be found in the fact that there is no homonymous kin-state of Aromanians unlike in the cases of other recognised minorities including Greeks, Macedonians and Serbo-Montenegrins.<sup>75</sup> Despite the fact that Albania is a signatory of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Roma and Aromanians were not being accorded the same

<sup>70</sup> This was a type of identity card given by the Greek state to its co-ethnics especially in the countries where its co-ethnics could not acquire external Greek citizenship. This ID card was a quintessential example of ethnizenship as it gave the bearer rights usually associated with citizenship, short of full citizenship. Other countries have or had such documents, Hungary based on its 2002 status law and Croatia just recently introduced the so called ‘Croatia card’ serving a similar purpose, although until now there are no clear instructions on who can qualify as the recipient of this card.

<sup>71</sup> There are strong indications that the Greek state has often tied the status of Albanian migrants and seasonal workers (legal or illegal) in Greece to that of Greek minority in Albania. See Sarah F. Green, *Notes from the Balkans: Locating Marginality and Ambiguity on the Greek-Albanian Border* (Princeton University Press, 2005). Also Konstantinos Titselikis (et al.) [Τσιτσελίκης, Κωνσταντίνος Μπαλτωιώτης, Λάμπρος Τέλλογλου, Τ. Χριστόπουλος, Δημήτρης] *Greek Minority in Albania* [*Η ελληνική μειονότητα της Αλβανίας*], Κριτική, 2003.

<sup>72</sup> Tom Winnifrith, *Shattered Eagles: Balkan Fragments* (Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd, 1995).

<sup>73</sup> Tsitselikis, 2003, p.33.

<sup>74</sup> “Μία Γλώσσα Χωρίς Μία Λέξη.” [A language without a single word] (last accessed February 12, 2013) [http://news.kathimerini.gr/4dcgi/\\_w\\_articles\\_columns\\_2\\_28/06/2009\\_320247](http://news.kathimerini.gr/4dcgi/_w_articles_columns_2_28/06/2009_320247).

<sup>75</sup> Although these are two separate states currently, at the time of the adoption of minority rights legislation, they were one.

protection of the convention, but are “treated as ethnolinguistic minorities with lesser rights.”<sup>76</sup> Albania’s “government’s approach is to recognize only those minorities with a “kin-state”<sup>77</sup> – Greeks, Macedonians and Serbo-Montenegrins – as national minorities. These policies lead to a particular form of unevenness which affects national minorities without kin-states disparately.<sup>78</sup>

This is an obvious example of a double hermeneutic where the existence of a *homonymous* external kin-state is a precondition for the legal recognition of a national minority. Further, the Albanian government reserves the implementation of minority rights exclusively within the so-called “minority zones” limiting thus the breadth of these protections. Moreover, there is a feeling expressed by Aromanian Vlach activists, independent researchers, journalists and other minorities’ organisations that the census figures do not reflect reality on the ground and the entire 2011 census, which was the first one after 1989 that included ethnic self-declaration, was dubious and lacked transparency.<sup>79</sup> These allegations are not surprising bearing in mind the official state policies toward Vlachs.

#### 4.1.4. *Intra-Vlach divisions*

The existing political divisions among Aromanian Vlach population in Albania could be generally covered by the three most visible political identification tendencies and relevant manifestations thereof. The pro-Greek and Vlach-only, which form a vast majority and occasionally overlap in some respects and the pro-Romanian, the latter being by far the less numerous option. All of the factions have promote their Vlach ethnic background but differ on how they define their national identity. Namely, the pro-Greek politicians would concur with the majority of Vlachs in Greece that they are nationally Greek with Vlach linguistic and cultural traits. The pro-Greek body among politically active Vlachs in Albania are oftentimes activists of the “Omonoia” human rights organisation which is allegedly strongly influence by Greece and is representing its interests in Albania.<sup>80</sup> The only-Vlach ethnic entrepreneurs such as

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<sup>76</sup> Francesco Palermo and Natalie Sabanadze. *National Minorities in Inter-State Relations* (Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2011), p. 121.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> The unevenness of citizenship in these cases is rather ambiguous and the Albanian state is not officially discriminating against these two minorities but the existence of differentiated rights, in effect, limits the rights of Romany and Vlach minorities as compared to other minorities with kin-states.

<sup>79</sup> See also the declaration of Albania’s minorities not recognising the results of the 2011 census <http://www.unpo.org/article/13466>

<sup>80</sup> One of the prominent political activists of the (splinter) Omonoia organisation in *Korçë* is *Naum Disho* exhibits strong pro-Greek attitudes, both in speeches and in interview. His identification is primarily Greek and then Vlach. He considers being Vlach as a sub-ethnic category. Disho was sentenced to a year in prison for constructing a path to the cross at the Boboshtica cemetery leading to a cross erected to commemorate the Greek soldiers who died in the Greek-Italian war in 1940-41. His trial was seen as the politically motivated targeting of a vociferous pro-Greek Vlach by nationalists in Albania.

the prominent intellectual Theodhoraq Ciko would on the other hand claim that they are both nationally and ethnically Vlach and would deny having Greek (or Romanian) national consciousness. Ciko, for example traces the Albanian Vlach population's roots to antiquity and Alexander the Great.<sup>81</sup> All of my pro-Greek or Vlach-only interlocutors confirmed having Greek citizenship. However, even the pro-Greek politicians (apart from claiming the survival of their Greek identity) agree that the economic benefits and practical reasons which Greek citizenship carries, such as pensions, right to education and employment in the EU, are the main motivations for the acquisition of Greek citizenship.

The last group, and likely the least numerous one, is of Vlachs claiming Romanian national identity such as the one represented by the Korçë-based orthodox priest Dhimitraq Veriga. Veriga substantiates his pro-Romanian arguments by the proximity of Aromanian Vlach and the standard Romanian language.<sup>82</sup> Unlike Greece, Romania does not offer full citizenship but soft types of ethnizenship, rights to study in Romania, access to some social services, financial support etc. Recently, Romania has intensified its demands for the recognition of what it calls the Romanian/Aromanian minority<sup>83</sup> or Macedonian Romanians in Albania. Interestingly, just like Greece, Romania does not recognise the existence of a Vlach/Romanian language but nevertheless uses tests in Aromanian in order to identify individuals who can claim Romanian ethnizenship-associated rights such as the right to free university education including a scholarship/stipend.<sup>84</sup>

#### 4.1.5. Conclusion

Greek citizenship policies towards Aromanian Vlachs in Albania went from being somewhat restrictive in the 1990s to more expansive from the mid-2000s. Declared perceived co-ethnic identity (Vlach in this case) rather than Greek identity is a sufficient proof for the acquisition of Greek citizenship unlike some other cases when the applicant would at least performatively have to declare the identity of the external nation-state's dominant ethnic group. Obviously, the integration or incorporation of Aromanian Vlachs in Greece and their prominent role in the Greek national project was an important factor that conditioned the socio-historic

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<sup>81</sup> Interview, Korçë 21 January 2013.

<sup>82</sup> Interview, Korçë 22 January 2013.

<sup>83</sup> "Romania's Basescu Asks Albania to Recognise Aromanian Minority (SETimes.com)." Accessed 11 February 2013.

[http://setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en\\_GB/newsbriefs/setimes/newsbriefs/2010/06/09/nb-12](http://setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/newsbriefs/setimes/newsbriefs/2010/06/09/nb-12).

As to my knowledge similar claims have not been advanced by the Romanian state in respect to Vlachophone Roma anywhere.

<sup>84</sup> Basilēs G. Nitsiakos and Vassilis Nitsiakos. *On the Border: Transborder Mobility, Ethnic Groups and Boundaries along the Albanian-Greek Frontier*. LIT Verlag Münster, 2010.p. 433 That this is a common practice was confirmed by most of my interviewees.

understanding of Greece's policy makers based on the Greek case<sup>85</sup> where the vast majority of Vlachs have a strong Greek national identity. However, one cannot avoid noticing the instrumental purposes of extending Greek citizenship to Vlachs, thus strengthening Greece's claims about the larger numbers of ethnic Greeks that officially declared in Albania's censuses. The perceived co-ethnics largely accept Greek citizenship irrespective of their national identification since the threshold is very low but the benefits are still significant.

#### ***4. 2. Bunjevci in Serbia/Vojvodina and Croatia's external citizenship policies***

##### *4.2.1. Background (religion, ethnicity, language)*

In the case of the Bunjevac ethnic group in Vojvodina (Serbia), there is very little secondary literature coming from outside the group itself. There are two dominant interpretations of the population's past, a pro-Croat one<sup>86</sup> that says Bunjevci are just a 'sub-ethnic' group of Croats and a Bunjevac-only<sup>87</sup> one which argues that there is a distinct ethnic and national identity of Bunjevci (pl.) living in Vojvodina and parts of today's southern Hungary. These divisions correspond entirely to the political divisions within the ethnic Bunjevac population in Serbia. What both historiographies agree on is that the ancestors of the Bunjevci in today's Serbia migrated to the region around the northern Vojvodinian town of Subotica in the 17<sup>th</sup> century from the hinterland of the Adriatic littoral. This population speaks a dialect of the Serbo-Croat language (or the language group) and is predominantly Catholic. Although it is not my aim to analyse the 'ethnogenesis' and historical development of this ethnic group, a few points might be worth mentioning. Historically, this population was strongly influenced by two (often overlapping) national projects, the Yugoslav one and the Croat. The territory this population inhabited was part of the Hungarian counties under the Habsburg monarchy unlike the autonomous Croatia-Slavonia. This could be one of the reasons why, despite the attempts of national integration by Croatian nationalists of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, they were only partly successful. Žigmanov<sup>88</sup> even argues that Hungary consciously promoted a separate Bunjevac identity and allowed formal identification as Bunjevac in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century censuses.

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<sup>85</sup> This could be seen as a spill-over effect of the Greek nation building project on the territory of today's Greece.

<sup>86</sup> See for example Tomislav Žigmanov *Hrvati u Vojvodini u povijesti i sadašnjosti - osnovne činjenice*, 2009 and Robert Skenderović „Identitet bačkih Hrvata" 2011.

<sup>87</sup> Mijo Mandić. *Buni Bunjevci Bunjevci*. Bunjevačka matica, 2009.

<sup>88</sup> Interview with Tomislav Žigmanov, director of the Department for culture of Croats of Vojvodina, 24 January 2013, Subotica.

#### 4.2.2. Croatian citizenship law and practices

Some have argued that citizenship legislation and practices in Croatia since the establishment of the independent state in 1991, were used to bolster a form of 'transnational nationalism', "a nationalism that, by taking Croatian ethnicity as its core, aimed not only to homogenise the national population through the exclusion of non-Croats, but also to include all ethnic Croats into Croatian citizenry, regardless of their place or country of residence."<sup>89</sup> Croatian citizenship law did not change significantly up until 2011 but the administrative practices employed in the post-2000 period (after the end of Franjo Tuđman's ethnocratic rule, when the European integration and democratisation processes were accelerated) have been altered both by the (re)admission of non-ethnic Croats and by more thorough screening of ethnic Croat applicants. The privileges and facilitated accesses offered to ethnic Croats were not curbed not even by the latest law adopted in the late 2011.<sup>90</sup> What has changed gradually are the practices regarding citizenship admission since 2000, a development that was sanctioned by the 2011 law. As compared to the 1990s much more stringent rules were introduced for proving one's belonging to the Croatian nation. One's "declaration of ethnic membership in legal transactions, allegation of such membership in particular public documents, protection of rights and promotion of interests of Croatian people and active participation in Croatian cultural, scientific or sport associations abroad"<sup>91</sup> has been since 2000 a necessary precondition for the application.

Part of the rationale behind these changes could probably be found in the misuses and manipulations which this very vague and expansive ethnic citizenship regime was susceptible. In the 1990s it was, arguably, in the interest of the Croatian government to extend Croatian citizenship to as many ethnic Croats (or perceived ethnic Croats) in Serbia as a way of reciprocating Serbia's support for the ethnic Serb rebellion in Croatia. Reciprocity in ethnic relations continued after the end of the war and could be illustrated by the opening of the FR Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) consulate in the Croatian city of Vukovar where a significant ethnic Serb population remained after the integration into the Croatian state to opening Croatia's consulate in Subotica, a town where the largest population of Bunjevci in Serbia resides.<sup>92</sup>

These general developments have had an influence on the Bunjevac population and their acquisition of Croatian citizenship. In the 1990s identifying as

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<sup>89</sup> Francesco Ragazzi, Igor Štiks, Viktor Koska, *Country Report: Croatia* (EUDO Citizenship Observatory, Revised and updated version 2013).

<sup>90</sup> In fact the 2011 Law on Modifications and Amendments of the Law on Croatian Citizenship formally broadened the rights of ethnic Croat kin including ethnizenship rights based on the so-called "Croatia card"

<sup>91</sup> Francesco Ragazzi, Igor Štiks, Viktor Koska (2013).

<sup>92</sup> Interview with the President of the Bunjevci National Council in Vojvodina/Serbia Ivan Sedlak, former minister without portfolio in the FRY government in charge of minority issues.



Bunjevac or simply as Catholic with a South Slavic surname<sup>93</sup> was usually considered a valid proof of one's Croat national identity. In the 2000s, however, the treatment of applicants who self-identify as Bunjevci changed and Bunjevac national self-identification became detrimental to one's application for the Croatian citizenship. In other words, based on some of the negative responses of the Croatian state, self-identifying as Bunjevac after 2000 was considered a reason for rejection of application for Croatian citizenship. In most cases Croatia's ministry of interior in the post-2000 period rejected those applications on the grounds that it does not recognise the "artificial Bunjevac nation"<sup>94</sup> and considered that applicants did not prove sufficiently that they belong to the Croatian nation. A large number of Bunjevci of either national identification possess Croatian citizenship though. Most of my interviewees mentioned the practical benefits Croatian citizenship carries including visa-free travel in the period when Serbian citizens needed visas for most European countries, with the benefits of the EU citizenship as the main reason for the application.

#### 4.2.3. *Demography, self-identification, censuses and legal minority framework in Serbia/Vojvodina*

Since 1945 and based on the relevant decree,<sup>95</sup> should one declare Bunjevac ethnicity before a state official, the official concerned would enter "Croat" instead of "Bunjevac" in all the official documents, thus precluding one from formally identifying as Bunjevac. The Yugoslav state policy was to rebuff the existence of a separate Bunjevac ethnicity (*nacionalnost*) but rather to strengthen the national projects of the constitutive nations (*narod*), in this case Croatian, and to account for groups with ethnocultural proximity to be an integral part of the larger nation in question. Since the 1991 census, one can declare Bunjevac ethnicity in all formal occasions and be considered as such. This change of official policy is often ascribed to (the then Serbia's president) Slobodan Milošević's desire to divide the Croat national community in Vojvodina and weaken the potential influence Croatia could have had on them. According to a similar argument, many Croats also preferred to declare as Bunjevac in order to avoid being stigmatised as Croats, thus increasing the number of self-declared Bunjevci in the 1990s. These reasons are true to a large degree but definitely not the only ones for national identification as Bunjevac. There were grass-

<sup>93</sup> My interviewees confirmed that it was sufficient to present the Croatian authorities with a Catholic church issued statement of one's religious creed in order to be eligible for the Croatian citizenship.

<sup>94</sup> Some of the applications for Croatian citizenship after 2000, based on ethnic principles for acquisition were rejected in the cases in which the applicant at any given moment or situation officially declared (usually in censuses, in school or university records etc.) their ethnicity as Bunjevac even at one occasion although they could have otherwise declared their ethnicity as Croat. I was given access to a number of rejected applications whose names are known to me, but due to the sensitivity of the matter I cannot publically state them.

<sup>95</sup> Odluka br 1040/1945, Glavni narodnoslobodilački odbor Vojvodine /GNOOV/, 14 May 1945, Novi Sad.

root demands for the recognition of a separate Bunjevac nation. In the last three censuses the number of self-declared Bunjevci varies between 16,000 and 20,000. The Serbian state and the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina recognise Bunjevci as a distinct national community which established its own national council as a form of national cultural autonomy.

#### 4.2.4. *Intra-Bunjevac divisions*

Amongst the population that is identified as Bunjevac there are some who declare their ethnic and national identity to be Bunjevac, while others declare their nationality to be Croat with Bunjevac as an 'sub-ethnic identity'<sup>96</sup>. These correspond to two officially recognised (by the Republic of Serbia and the AP of Vojvodina) national councils, both with their seats in Subotica, the National council of the Croat national minority and the National council of the Bunjevac national minority. Formal recognition and the financial benefits of establishing a national council should certainly not be neglected in this case. National councils not only receive funds from the state/autonomous province but have extensive powers over cultural and educational institutions. Through providing structural, formal and financial support, the host state recognises these divisions and arguably sustains them.

#### 4.2.5. *Conclusion*

During the 1990s Croatia's citizenship policies towards Bunjevci of both Croat and Bunjevac national self-identification were of an expansive nature; one's Catholic background was usually considered sufficient for the acquisition of Croatian citizenship even if they publically and officially declared as Bunjevac. After 2000, despite the fact that the legal norms have not changed, these perceived co-ethnics could attain Croatian citizenship only if they declared as Croats and submitted proofs of that. A simple statement of one's ethnicity is not sufficient but a verifiable document where one would declare their Croat ethnicity persistently over a certain period is a necessary condition for the application. There is an obvious change from the practices of extending citizenship to Bunjevci in the 1990s and 2000s, probably corresponding to the interests of the different governments and changed foreign policy prerogatives. This case clearly illustrates a departure from policies where perceived co-ethnicity still exists in sociocultural aspects (Croatia considers all Bunjevci to be nationally Croats, the Bunjevac nationality to be "artificial") but formally Bunjevac national self-identification is not considered as a proof of one's co-ethnicity with the kin-state majority.

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<sup>96</sup> Most of my interviews used the term sub-ethnic, meaning ethnic as opposed to national.

## 5. Conclusion

The comparison of the two cases of perceived co-ethnics Aromanian Vlachs in Albania and Bunjevci in Serbia (Vojvodina) is fruitful in the sense that they are typical of perceived co-ethnic citizenship in the Balkans but also show the need to incorporate the concept into the general literature on minorities and kin-state citizenship.

The cases show useful variation in which the Greek-Vlach case moves from restrictive to extremely expansive and the Croatian-Bunjevac case has a diametrically opposite trajectory. The changes could be partly explained by instrumental uses of external citizenship serving foreign policy prerogatives. Further, and in line with the previous argument, in the Greek-Vlach case, declaring Vlach ethnicity and proving knowledge of the Vlach language is sufficient for the acquisition of Greek citizenship. In the Croatian-Bunjevac case the same was true in the 1990s but the declaration of Bunjevac ethnicity has been able to cause rejection of the citizenship application since the mid-2000s. The other cases mentioned in the paper fall somewhere in between the two based on these criteria. In the cases of Aromanian Vlachs in Albania and Bunjevci in Serbia, the roles of the host, nationalising states towards these populations are significantly different. While Albania does everything not to recognise Vlach population as a national minority, Serbia has proactive policies and supports the Bunjevac national project. In both cases these policies are designed to obviate the role of the (perceiving) kin-states manifested by the extension of their ethnic citizenship, in this case Greece and Croatia. Despite different constellations the results in the political identifications within the named populations themselves, the intra-Vlach and intra-Bunjevac political divisions are remarkably similar.

In terms of the existing literature referred to in the paper, Walzer's concept of 'ethnic relatives' when applied to the cases bears more resemblance to the understandings and perceptions of ethnic entrepreneurs of the kin-states rather than to a usable analytical category.

Brubaker's triadic nexus constellation, on the other hand, could be further developed to take into account somewhat more marginal but still important cases of perceived co-ethnics and their role in the relations between host and kin-states as well as their relevance in the citizenship and minorities scholarship. In particular, the cases show that sometimes within the relational context of the triadic nexus fields, the relations within the triad can be unidirectional. In the case of perceived co-ethnics the external national homeland or the self-declared kin-state unidirectionally perceives and accords citizenship to a population that does not consider themselves a part of that nation necessarily or whose identifications varies sometimes, most often in relation to that state's citizenship policies frequently depending on concrete benefits, protection, advocacy etc. Building on the constructivist literature that illustrates how externalisation of citizenship policies can strengthen groupness of kin-minorities, the paper shows that by extending kin-state citizenship to perceived co-ethnics, governments of kin-states include already politically mobilised groups

such as Aromanian Vlachs or Bunjevci into the Greek and Croatian national projects respectively. This conclusion can be further generalised beyond the cases mentioned in the paper.

Another point that could be developed in future research relates to undirectionality within the triadic nexus. In particular, to the cases in which a national minority considers itself as belonging to the ethnic group of an external state while the latter's policies do not correspond to that perception. All of these could make us reconsider definitions of minorities and show the complexity that external citizenship based on ethnic affiliation can produce. Finally, these sort of constellations contribute to the unevenness of citizenship in which there is no clear fit in how the actors (states, national minorities) define their respective national projects and the oftentimes discretionary citizenship acquisition procedures.



ISSN 2046-4096